Cataloging Cultural Objects in Archival Collections

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Background

• Historic manuscript tradition
• Public or government archives tradition

Both firmly rooted in TEXT Description strongly influenced by library practice


Background

• Diversity of the archival community
• “Unique nature” of collections as justification for non-standardization
  – In fact early automation efforts revealed unsuspected similarities and common ground

Background

Major developments in descriptive standards in archival community

1977 – 1983 NISTF recommends establishment of a standard format as the first step
publishes "Data Elements Used in Archives, Manuscripts and Records Information Systems: A Dictionary of Standard Terminology" 1982 – serves as basis for USMARC/AMC format, published 1984 (LC)
Also in 1983 – Steven Hensen's first edition of APPM

1980s
SAA charges a new standing committee, Committee on Archival Information Exchange (CAIE), to take over from NISTF whose charge had expired
RLG Advisory Committee on Archives and Manuscripts works on data elements dictionary
National Archives internal working group develops data elements
LC establishes Committee on Specialized Cataloging

1988 Revised edition of APPM
Background

Major developments in descriptive standards in archival community
1988 Working Group on Standards for Archival Description
Received funding from NHPRC to "consider questions relating to descriptive standards and to try to provide a conceptual framework within which the profession can consider these issues."

**After much discussion agreed to concentrate solely on textual paper-based archival materials**

Where we are now?

- MARC21 and EAD
  - Both widely used in archival collections, both unsatisfactory in different ways for cataloging visual materials and artifacts
- APPM evolves into DACS / Describing Archives: A Content Standard
  - DACS improves several aspects of APPM but still not really visual-friendly
- Way too many standards!

How can CCO help?

- What kind of archives most likely to use?
  - Photographic collections
  - Film archives
  - Museum archives
  - Archives and historical societies with significant "mixed media" and artifactual collections
- And how can we reach them?
Data Content Standards

AACR2

Chapter 4

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

APPM/DACS

AMIM

Graphic Materials

Required by OCLC, RLIN and WLN

Examples

Examples
Examples

Descriptive Summary
Repository: Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University
Creator: Jerry Alton
Title: Photographic Index

This index is an index to the collection that contains ca. 6,000 negatives (16mm, 35mm, 3\(\frac{3}{4}\)\text{\footnotesize in.}, contact sheets, and glossy 4\(\times\)6\(\frac{3}{4}\) prints), and ca. 400 color slides. It covers productions of Off-Broadway theaters of New York, and includes actors and performers photographed in assignments for the New York Times.

Historical Note
Jerry (born Evelyn Foly, 1920-1987) documented Off-Broadway theater from her arrival in New York in 1952 through the late 1980s. She also worked as a photographer for the Arts and Leisure section of the New York Times, for which she photographed the subjects of feature articles, ca. 1988-1992.
Getting the word out

- Remember the snail - it won’t happen fast
- Archivists will need to be convinced that this doesn’t mean extra work or cataloging twice - or does it?